



GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

Monkeypox Infections in Animals: Interim Guidance for Persons Who Have Frequent Contact with Animals, Including Pet Owners, Pet Shop Employees, Animal Handlers, and Animal Control Officers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been working closely with several state and local health departments and other partners to investigate cases of monkeypox virus infections among humans who had direct or close contact with ill prairie dogs, a Gambian rat, and a rabbit that was housed in a veterinary clinic with an ill prairie dog. Exposure to ill animals would have occurred after April 15, 2003.

Monkeypox is a rare viral disease that typically occurs among animals and people in central and west Africa. In humans, the illness produces a blister-like rash similar to that of smallpox. Time from contact with a sick animal to the beginning of fever in a person is usually about 12 days. During the current outbreak in the United States, most infected persons have had illness that was relatively mild to moderate in severity, and there have been no deaths from monkeypox. However, the disease can be severe, and in Africa about 1% to 10% of human cases are fatal (for additional information about monkeypox, see www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol7no3/hutinG1.htm).

This document provides interim guidance for persons who have frequent contact with animals. It will be updated as new information becomes available and after consultation with additional public health partners.

Spread of Monkeypox

Humans appear to get monkeypox mainly from direct contact with infected animals. Limited human-to-human spread of monkeypox has been reported among people in rural Africa, most likely as a result of direct contact (i.e., skin-to-skin) or contact with respiratory droplets during prolonged close contact. How animals become infected is less clear. The virus might be transmitted to animals through droplets entering the nose, mouth, skin cuts, or scrapes or through consumption of infected animal tissue.

Monkeypox Infection in U.S. Animals

In the current U.S. outbreak, illness in animals has been reported to include fever, cough, discharge from the eyes, and enlarged lymph nodes, followed by a bumpy or blister-like rash. Some animals have died and others have recovered. The types of animals that may become ill with monkeypox are currently unknown. Until more information is available, it is prudent to assume that any mammal, including common household pets (e.g., dogs, cats) and "pocket pets" (e.g., hamsters or gerbils), can get monkeypox if exposed to another animal that is infected.

Quarantine of Exposed Animals

Any mammal that has come in contact with (i.e., lived in the same house or come from the same pet store or other pet facility) an animal known to have monkeypox is considered exposed and should be placed under 30-day quarantine (from the day of exposure). The following steps are practical for dealing with a quarantined animal:

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- The exposed animal should be placed in a room with a closed door and kept away from all other animals and persons for 30 days from the date of exposure or purchase. The amount of time spent with the exposed animal should be limited.
- Immunocompromised persons (e.g., persons who have had transplants or have cancer, HIV, and other diseases that affect the immune system are considered immunocompromised) should not care for an ill animal or an animal that is under a 30-day quarantine. General information about diseases and pets is available at CDC's Healthy Pets, Healthy People Web site at (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/pets/index.htm).
- After feeding or caring for the animal, wash hands thoroughly with soap and hot water before having contact with other persons or animals.
- Clothing should be changed after feeding or caring for the animal. Laundry (e.g., towels, clothing) may be washed in a standard washing machine with hot water and detergent. The use of chlorine bleach during hot-water washing can provide an added measure of safety. Care should be used when handling soiled laundry to avoid direct contact with contaminated material. Soiled laundry should not be shaken or moved around a lot. Infectious particles could be spread and breathed in.
- If the animal shows signs of illness during the 30-day period, the local or state health department should be contacted immediately for advice on what to do with the animal. See the following web site for help in contacting state and local health departments at (www.cdc.gov/other.htm#states).

During the 30-day quarantine, persons with an exposed or sick animal need to carefully watch themselves and other members of their household for signs of illness that could be monkeypox. If a fever or other signs of illness develop, a health care provider and state or local health department should be contacted immediately.

What to Do with Exposed Animals That Cannot be Quarantined

Some people may find it difficult to care for exposed animals in quarantine or may be concerned that they or their household members might become ill from contact with their animal during the quarantine period. In such cases, pet owners may decide they do not want to keep the animal. Persons who do not wish to keep these animals should contact their state or local health department for advice. In some cases, the health department may recommend the animal be taken to a veterinarian to be cared for during the 30-day quarantine, or they may recommend humane euthanasia of the animal. In some cases, the health department may collect the animal. Do **not** take the animal to a veterinarian without calling first and explaining that the animal has been exposed to monkeypox (see the Management of Ill Animals section below). Do **not** abandon animals at shelters or release them back into the wild; the animals cannot survive and could cause monkeypox in wild animals.

If the animal dies, the state or local health department should be contacted for advice on what to do with the body. Do **not** throw the animal's body away in household trash or at a dump or landfill. Do **not** bury the animal's body on your property.

Management of Ill Animals

If an animal develops signs of monkeypox, the state or local health department should be contacted. The health department may collect the animal. If the health department recommends that the animal be taken to a veterinarian, notify the veterinary clinic about the animal prior to transport. The veterinarian should make arrangements for the animal to be brought into the clinic safely, without entering the waiting room.

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One person should transport the ill animal. During transport, the animal should be confined in a closed container (e.g., place the cage in a cardboard box with a few air-holes) and placed as far from the driver as possible, while maintaining safety of the animal. Following transport, the area of the vehicle where the animal was confined should be cleaned and disinfected. Standard household cleaners or disinfectants may be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Cleaning of Household after Removal of an Animal with Monkeypox

Contaminated surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected. Standard household cleaners or disinfectants may be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Do not dispose of the animal's bedding, cage, toys or food and water bowls with the household trash or at a dump or landfill because this material may be potentially infectious; contact the state or local health department for further instructions. Follow the laundry steps provided above when caring for a quarantined animal.

Care of Animals by Humans Infected with Monkeypox

It is unknown whether persons with monkeypox can spread the disease to their animals. Persons with monkeypox should limit their contact with mammalian pets, including cats, dogs, and pocket pets. Pets should not be allowed to share an ill owner's bed and should not be allowed to have contact with clothing and other materials that have come into contact with an infected person's skin lesions. Persons with monkeypox should limit contact with animals until the health care provider says it is safe to resume normal activities.

Additional Information

For more information, contact the state or local health department or the CDC Emergency Operations Center 770-488-7100. Additional information and recommendations will be released as they become available. Updated information will be available at CDC's monkeypox Web site at (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/monkeypox/index.htm).

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/ncidod/monkeypox or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY)